

## Aufsatz

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# Construction of a Deified War Hero (*gunshin*)

## The Shifting Significance of Hirose Takeo's Manseibashi Statue 1910s-1930s

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### Introduction

This article concerns itself with the construction of Hirose Takeo (1868-1905) as Japan's first "deified war hero" (*gunshin*) by shedding light on the construction and unveiling of his bronze statue at Manseibashi in 1910 and the construction of a Shintō shrine for his spirit (*kami*) in his hometown of Taketa in 1935.\* I will discuss the shifting significance that Hirose played within Japanese society as arguably one of the most iconic figures of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). Moreover, through the analysis of the efforts that went into commemorating Hirose, this article offers insights into the nature and content of *gunshin* itself. I argue that the literal meaning of *gunshin* does not accurately reflect the actual content of the phenomenon.

The Russo-Japanese War was an expression of Japan's imperialist ambitions. After the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), Germany, France, and Russia intervened in the negotiations regarding the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895). The aim of the so-called 'Triple Intervention', on paper was convincing Japan to soften the conditions of the peace treaty with Qing China. While in reality, the intervention was motivated by each member's own imperialist goals in China and South-East Asia. Czarist Russia's goal was a warm-water port in order to then further its dominance into Asia. Despite being obliged by an agreement between the Chinese Qing Empire and Russia, to withdraw troops before 8 April 1903, Russia increased its troops along the south bank of the Yalu river at the border region to Korea. Japan, citing fear for the safety of Korea and Japan itself facing the prospect of Russian military influence in its direct surrounding hardened its position and demanded Russia to withdraw its troops from Manchuria as well as the liberalization of Fengtian. When Russia refused, Japan decided to go to war on 21 December 1903 and declared war officially on 8 February 1904. Because Japan could not afford a long-term war, it formulated the plan to eradicate the Russian troops in Manchuria, and rely on its ally Great Britain to supply Japan with the necessary funds and ammunition. In order to

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\* In accordance with East-Asian customs, the names of historical figures and authors will be given with the last name preceding the first name.

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transport troops to the Liaodong Peninsula, the Japanese military leadership made plans to blockade the military haven, Port Arthur. In total three attempts were made to block Port Arthur, during which one of the most iconic figures of the Russo-Japanese War arose.<sup>1</sup>

On 27 March 1905, during the second attempted naval blockade of Port Arthur, Hirose Takeo, a lieutenant commander on board of the cargo ship *Fukui-maru*, which has been used to blockade Port Arthur, lost his life while trying to board a lifeboat. The ship itself was about to be sunk in front of the opening that connected the bay of Port Arthur with the ocean in an attempt to cut off the Russian military harbor from the sea, effectively rendering it useless for the Russians. Moments before he lost his life, Hirose had frantically been searching the entire ship (allegedly three times) for his subordinate Chief-Warrant Officer Sugino Magoshichi. While Hirose's death did not lead to any immediate military success, and the Japanese Navy swiftly prepared for a third attempt which was executed on 5 May a little over a month after the second attempt, Hirose became a sensation and a war hero deeply connected with the memory of the Russo-Japanese War in Japan in the decades to come.

In the weeks following his death, Japanese audiences were served a steady stream of anecdotes and tales about Hirose by the mass media generously provided by Hirose's friends, family, and military personnel. The public's morale was arguably still high as it would yet take some months before the number of casualties started to rise steeply. Colleagues of Hirose (incidentally also former classmates from their time in the Naval Academy) immediately realized the potential of Hirose as an asset in public relations. It was likely in this realization that Nagata Yasujirō<sup>2</sup> (1867-1923), an adjunct of the combined fleet, contacted Commander Takarabe Takeshi<sup>3</sup> (1867-1949) and Lieutenant Commander Mori Etsutarō<sup>4</sup> (1867-1957) via telegram to discuss Hirose's virtuous character. He called him a "model soldier" (*gunjin no kikan*), a description which arguably Admiral Tōgō

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<sup>1</sup> See on the Russo-Japanese War: Kowner, Rotem. *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5: Volume 1: Centennial Perspectives*. Global Oriental, 2007; Shimazu, Naoko. *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War*. Cambridge University Press, 2009; Steinberg, John. *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*. Vol. 2. Brill, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Nagata Yasujirō was an officer of the Imperial Japanese Navy. He graduated from the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy in 1886. Receiving his first command on 22 June 1900, he was promoted to lieutenant commander in the same year. During the Russo-Japanese War he was the liaison of Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō with the civilian government in Tokyo. Later in his life he held different positions within the Japanese Navy until his death in 1923. Fukukawa Hideki. *Nihon kaigun shōkan jiten [Dictionary of Japanese Navy Admirals]*. Fuyō Shobō Shuppan, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Takarabe Takeshi was an officer of the Imperial Japanese Navy. He graduated together with Nagata Yasujirō and Hirose Takeo from the Imperial Japanese Navy Academy as the 15<sup>th</sup> class. Similar to Hirose who had studied abroad in Russia, Takarabe simultaneously was sent to Great Britain as part of an exchange from 1897-1899. During the Russo-Japanese War he held the military rank of captain and served on the Imperial General Headquarters. In the 1920s he would serve as Navy Minister from 1923-1924, 1924-1927 and 1929-1930; Fujiwara Akira. "Takarabe Takeshi", *Nihon Dai Hyakka Zensho (Nipponika) [Complete Set of the Large Encyclopedia of Japan]*. JapanKnowledge, last access: 22 February 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Mori Etsutarō (1867-1957) was a Japanese Navy officer that ended his career with the rank of Vice-Admiral (*chūjō*). He graduated from the Naval Academy in the same year as Hirose, Takarabe, and Nagata. Nonetheless, aside from matching age and rank, no material that bring him into contact with Hirose has been found; Fukukawa Hideki. *Nihon kaigun shōkan jiten [Dictionary of Japanese Navy Admirals]*. Fuyō Shobō Shuppan, 2000.

Heihachirō<sup>5</sup> (1848-1934) would later solidify, and even went as far to state that “it would be no exaggeration to call him a ‘war god’” (*ikusagami*).<sup>6</sup> While it is unclear what the communication habitus in the navy was regarding the usage of official communication lines for private correspondence, it was likely intentional and even allowed. Moreover, despite the “private” nature of this telegram, the motive of turning Hirose into public relations asset likely led to the intentional leakage of the telegram to newspapers. Thus, the first character in the pantheon of Japanese “deified war heroes” was born. Hirose’s apotheosis began with his death, but only after his funeral on 13 April 1904 and the massive coverage which it was subjected to, the discussion pertaining to him shifted from mourning to commemoration. And as it furthered, it became clear that the advocates for the commemoration of Hirose looked westwards for inspiration.<sup>7</sup> One notable example was an anonymous reader of the *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun* who, aside from advocating for a bronze statue, argued that Hirose’s name should be eternalized by naming streets and parks after him.<sup>8</sup> One very ambitious reader went as far as calling for a combination of different methods. He proposed to further emphasize the importance of Hirose by building a statue of him and placing it in a street or a park named after him. He went even a step further proposing that Hirose’s birth town was to be renamed to “Hirose Village” (*Hirose-son*).<sup>9</sup> Eventually, most of these ideas came never to fruition and a proposal was made to immortalize Hirose’s likeness in cast bronze.

### Hirose and the Birth of *Gunshin*

While Nagata’s telegram referred to Hirose as an *ikusagami* (The original Sino-Japanese Characters: 軍神), a war god, immediately thereafter the term *gunshin* (also 軍神) surfaced. Both Japanese terms are written with the same two characters, but in the latter case the reading is the Sino-Japanese reading (*on’yomi*). Although the reason for this change from Japanese to Sino-Japanese reading is unclear, one might speculate that the

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<sup>5</sup> Tōgō Heihachirō (1847-1934), was an admiral of the Japanese Imperial Navy and attained legendary status after his decisive victory during the Battle of the Japanese Sea on 27 May 1905, being afterwards dubbed the “Nelson of the East” (*Tōyō no Neruson*). He became fleet admiral in April 1913. “Tōgō Heihachirō”, *Nihon Jinmei Dai-jiten* [Large encyclopedia of Japanese Names]. JapanKnowledge, last accessed 22 February 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Telegram by Nagata Yasujirō, addressed at Takarabe Takeshi. File name: *Meiji San jū nana nen san gatsu ni jū ku nichi Denpō-yaku Takarabe Chūsa ate Nagata rengō kantai chōkan* [29 March 1904, transcription of telegram sent by Fleet Commander Nagata addressed at Commander Takarabe]. 29 March 1904. p. 1-2. *Bōei Kenkyū-jo*, JACAR [C11081428400].

<sup>7</sup> “‘Shasetsu’ Hirose chūsa no chūretsu hyōshō ni tsuite” [‘Editorial’, on the Public Acknowledgement of Commander Hirose’s Unswerving Loyalty]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, Morning edition (ME), 2 April 1904. p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> For an in-depth analysis of Japanese statues, see Saaler, Sven. *Men in Metal A Topography of Public Bronze Statuary in Modern Japan*. Brill, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> A Topography of Modern Japanese Bronze Statuary - Personality Cult in Modern Japan. <http://statues.japanesehistory.de/index.html>; “Hirose chūsa dōzō, nesshin dōjō-sei” [Commander Hirose’s Statue, a Life of Zeal and Sympathy]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 1 April 1904. p. 2; Saaler, Sven, “Personenkult im Modernen Japan: Repräsentationen der Nation im öffentlichen Raum, 1880 bis 2007” [Personality Cult in Modern Japan. The Representation of the Nation in Public Space, 1880 to 2007]. In: Judit Arokay et al. (Ed.): *Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner zu Ehren. Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag*. München: Ludicium, 2008, pp. 355-379; Saaler, Sven, “Men in Metal: Representations of the Nation in Public Space in Meiji Japan, 1868-1912”. In: [Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung](#), vol. 19 (2009), pp. 27-43.

Sino-Japanese reading was deemed to be more masculine. Rather than pronunciation and reading, a more contested and perhaps even more important problem is the question of the meaning of the term. As the second used character refers to all things spiritual and divine, it is not evident whether *gunshin* were meant to be religious or irreligious in nature. This article argues that the term *gunshin* does not reflect the content of the phenomenon accurately. Because, it is clear that Hirose, as well as later *gunshin*, were dealt with in strictly irreligious terms and that for a large part they were also a popular phenomenon that increasingly was subjected to massive mediatization and commodification. There was little to no involvement of any form of priesthood, no complex interpretation of afterlife of the *gunshin*, nor is it unambiguous whether religious places of worship built in honor of men that became *gunshin* were built for the individual in question or the individual as *gunshin*. Naturally, *gunshin* were not exempt from the same religious services such as the so-called “invocation of the dead ceremonies” (*shōkon-sai*).<sup>10</sup> However, the identity of Hirose, and every other *gunshin*, as a member of the *gunshin* pantheon and a member of the much larger pantheon of “spirits of the war dead” (*eirei*) need to be seen as separate and perhaps even heterogeneous. Instead, it can be observed that Hirose and the rest of the *gunshin* were explicitly and exclusively dealt with as national heroes, whose images were preserved via irreligious, modern and, in the initial phase after the Russo-Japanese War, rather Western methods.<sup>11</sup> In other words, *gunshin* are war heroes, which likely were, perhaps nostalgically, inspired by war gods. Thus this article proposes the term “deified war heroes” instead of the more conventional “war gods” translation that other authors such as Naoko Shimazu and Sven Saaler propose.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps one could even go as far stating that *gunshin* could refer to a special class of celebrity heroes, which would shed light on historian Yamamuro Kentoku’s problem with regard to how *gunshin* are “hard to define as it is not always clear what sets *gunshin* apart from other Japanese war heroes”.<sup>13</sup> This article makes the case that the thing that sets *gunshin* apart from the ten thousands of war heroes at the Yasukuni shrine and other “protect the country”-shrines (*gokoku jinja*) is their individual characters which were the subject of massive mediatization and commodification as opposed to the *eirei* (spirit of the war dead) that were collectively subjected to mediatization.<sup>14</sup> The following parts

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<sup>10</sup> Schölz, Tino. “Die Gefallenen besänftigen und ihre Taten rühmen”: *Gefallenenkult und politische Verfasstheit in Japan seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2015, p. 85-140

<sup>11</sup> Yamamuro Kentoku. *Gunshin – kindai nihon ga unda ‘eiyū’-tachi no kiseki [War Gods, Trails of ‘Heroes’ Born in Modern Japan]*. Chūō kōron shinsha, 2007, p. i; Schölz, “Die Gefallenen besänftigen und ihre Taten rühmen”, p. 195-202.

<sup>12</sup> Satō Hiroo. *‘Shinkoku nihon’ kiki kara chūsei, soshite nashonarizumu e [‘Japan, Land of Deities’, from Ancient Times to the Middle Ages, and Further into Nationalism]*. Kōdansha, 2018; Takano Nobuhara. *Bushi shinkaku-ka no kenkyū [‘Research on the Deification of Japan’s Warrior Class’]*. 2 vols. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa bunkan. 2018; p. 169.

<sup>13</sup> Driessens, Olivier. “The celebrityization of society and culture: Understanding the structural dynamics of celebrity culture.” *International journal of cultural studies* 16.6 (2013): 641-657; Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. i.

<sup>14</sup> Schölz, “Die Gefallenen besänftigen und ihre Taten rühmen”, p. 85-276.

will exemplify and substantiate this idea based on the case of Hirose Takeo and the commemorative events that led to his apotheosis to Japan's first *gunshin*.

## A Likeness Cast in Bronze

Three days after the second attempt at a naval blockade at Port Arthur, commissioned officers at the Navy Ministry proposed to fund primarily the project with donation made by Japanese audiences.<sup>15</sup> This turned the entire project into a public relations effort with which eventually newspaper companies, more specifically the major dailies *Jiji Shinpō*, *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun* and *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun*, allied themselves with.<sup>16</sup> While navy officers initially considered the Hibiya Park in Tōkyō as a suitable location for the statue due to the potential symbolical nature of its lake which could be used to represent the sea around Port Arthur, post-war dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Portsmouth Treaty that concluded the war, embodied by the Hibiya Riots of 1905 that started in the Hibiya park directly in front of the Imperial Palace, hindered the acquirement of a permit.<sup>17</sup> Instead, a plaza at Manseibashi in Suda town in Tōkyō's Kanda ward was chosen where later a train station was built, the Manseibashi Station (*Manseibashi eki*).<sup>18</sup> Hitherto works that have dealt with the position of the Manseibashi statue seem to get the chronology of the location confused. Most recently, Sven Saaler's monograph *Men in Metal* states that "the initial location of Hibiya Park was exchanged for a square outside Manseibashi Station."<sup>19</sup> It is, however, important to note that not only was the statue finalized well before the station began operating in 1912, the massive development of infrastructure made, as this article will later elaborate, the position of the statue a problem. Whether any coordination occurred between the two projects is unclear as of this writing. However, it is doubtful given the problems that arose later. Furthermore, it is important to note, that no newspaper article preceding the unveiling of the Hirose statue made a specific mention of the Manseibashi station, but, instead only explicitly mention the Manseibashi neighborhood (*Manseibashi hotori*).<sup>20</sup> If the station had been

<sup>15</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 208; "Hirose chūsa no dōzō kensetsu e kaigun-shō shōkō-ra bokin hajimeru" [Toward the Construction of Commander Hirose's Statue, The Officers of the Navy Ministry began Collecting Money]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 30 March 1904. p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 210; Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 66-67; "Gunshin dōzō jomaku-shiki Fūu chū no jomaku, Tōgō taishō naku, Hirose chūsa dōzō jomaku-shiki" [Unveiling Ceremony of the War God Statue, Unveiling in Wind and Rain, Admiral Tōgō Crying, Unveiling Ceremony of Commander Hirose's Statue]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 30 May 1910. p. 3; "Ko-Hirose chūsa meiyō hyōshō no shakoku" [Company Announcement on the Public Acknowledgement of the Honor of Late-Commander Hirose]. In: *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*, ME, 31 March 1904. p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> "Ko-Hirose chūsa no kinenbutsu wa dōzō ni kimaru" [The Memento for Late-Commander Hirose is Decided to be a Statue]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 3 April 1904. p. 6; "Hirose chūsa no sōgi wa jū san nichi ni – Hirose chūsa no dōzō kensetsu-chi" [Commander Hirose's Funeral will be held on the Thirteenth, Commander Hirose's Statue's Construction Site]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 6 April 1904. p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin* [War Gods], p. 68-69. From here on this article refers to the plaza in front of the Manseibashi station as the "Manseibashi plaza" it is unclear whether the place was ordinarily referred to as the Manseibashi Plaza (for instance *Manseibashi hiroba*).

<sup>19</sup> Saaler, *Men in Metal*, p. 169.

<sup>20</sup> *Asahi kiji dētabēsu Kikuzō II bijuaru* [Asahi Newspaper Database, Kikuzō II Visual]. database.asahi.com. <http://database.asahi.com/library2e/main/top.php>; *Yomidasu rekishikan e Yomidasu history house*. database.yomiuri.co.jp/rekishikan/; Searches for mentions of the Manseibashi station prior to the unveiling of the Hirose statue, and even before the station began

an important factor in the position of the statue, one would have expected some mention. The statue in Tōkyō would eventually be erected in May 1910, five years after the plan surfaced. In the meantime, smaller projects to eternalize Hirose were on the move.

The construction of the Manseibashi statue was preceded by the construction of two statues, one in a park in Takayama in the Gifu prefecture, in 1906, and another one in a park in Taketa in 1907. A year after the Taketa statue was unveiled, Manseibashi was decided upon as the construction site of the Tōkyō statue.<sup>21</sup> The Manseibashi statue was designed by the sculptor Watanabe Nagao (1874-1952), an acquaintance of Hirose during their younger years, who had also designed the Taketa statue.<sup>22</sup> After he created a prototype, the casting of the actual statue was done by Watanabe's son-in-law, the sculptor Okazaki Sessei (1854-1921).<sup>23</sup> Watanabe shed light on his creative process in an interview in the magazine *The Graphic*.<sup>24</sup> He briefly explained why he was chosen for this project, and mentioned the navy personnel, such as Commander Takarabe Takeshi and Lieutenant Commander Mori Etsutarō, that were enthusiastic about the statue. Then he continued, discussing the details of his work. For one, Watanabe explained his decisions regarding the height of the statue of Hirose and the one of his subordinate Sugino Magoshichi, whom he allegedly had wanted to save, to stress the “glorious” dimension of the two. Watanabe made Sugino's height approximately 3.3 meters, 0.3 meters smaller than Hirose. The implications that this choice carries are rather straightforward: the difference was small enough to not overshadow Sugino, but together with the positioning of the two characters, it represented the symbolic dynamic between the two. Furthermore, Watanabe stressed that he did not want to merely present Hirose in an aesthetic way but deemed a manner that properly expressed his character to be more appropriate to convey his significance to future generations. The eventual posture was one of three that had been suggested to the Naval General Staff.<sup>25</sup>

Iconographically speaking, Hirose's statue was built to present the commander calm, composed and regal in the face of calamity striking, with Sugino at the bottom of the base.<sup>26</sup> The statue was funded by around 10,000 people who collectively donated 26,450 yen – this was at the time an immense sum.<sup>27</sup> There were two major events that guided

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operating in 1912 bring up no articles, including standalone articles on the building of the station. Neither in the meta data of the articles, nor in their actual content any mention of plans to build the station can be found. This is despite the fact that the meta data and content of the articles on the Hirose statue do mention the Manseibashi neighborhood. Photographic evidence of the statue is scarce also. As with *Figure 3*, given the angle from which the photograph was taken, in addition to the orientation of the station relative to the Manseibashi station, it suggests the absence of any high buildings behind the station.

<sup>21</sup> “Hirose chūsa dōzō kensetsu-chi kettei” [Construction Site of Commander Hirose's Statue has been Decided]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 27 November 1908. p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> “[Yomiuri-shō] kaigunshō no yūshi hakki ni yoru ko-Hirose chūsa no dōzō, Watanabe Nagao ga genkei seisaku-chū” [[Excerpt from the Yomiuri] The Statue of Commander Hirose via the Voluntary Proposal of the Navy Ministry, Watanabe Nagao is Producing the Model of the Statue]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 29 May 1908. p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Watanabe Nagao. “Hirose chūsa no dōzō” [Commander Hirose's Statue]. *The Graphic*. 1 June 1910. p. 1-7.

<sup>25</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 208.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 67.



the unveiling of Hirose's statue: Firstly, 27 May 1910 marked the fifth anniversary of the Battle of Tsushima, in Japan known as Naval Battle of the Sea of Japan (*Nihonkai kaisen*), which had ended in a decisive victory for the Japanese Navy and was arguably the most important naval battle of the Russo-Japanese War, and therefore provided an opportunity to also celebrate Japan's first *gunshin*. The unveiling of the Manseibashi statue was announced to the public quite early, as newspapers on 5 May told Japanese audiences the unveiling was planned for 27 May, the same day when the navy would hold its special day of celebration.<sup>28</sup> A day later, however, on 6 May, Edward VII, the British Monarch, died. Due to the British-Japanese Alliance of 1902, this became of considerable importance in Japan, too.<sup>29</sup> On 20 May, a memorial service in honor of the late King was held in the Trinity Cathedral of Tōkyō. This led to the Imperial Household entering a period of mourning, and as Navy Day overlapped with the mourning period, it had to be canceled, despite the Navy's ambition to make it "a day that should not be forgotten" (*wasuru bekarazaru hi*).<sup>30</sup> Out of respect for the mourning period, volunteers in the Kanda district also exclaimed their intent to postpone the unveiling of Hirose's statue so that it fell outside the mourning period of the Imperial Court.<sup>31</sup> The announcement came separately as, strictly speaking, the unveiling of the Manseibashi statue was to a large extent an independent event, despite the fact that the same navy personnel would have attended. This rescheduling, however, raises the question of whether the unveiling of the Manseibashi statue also became an Anglo-Japanese concern for the Navy and the volunteers. The month of May 1910 could be characterized in terms of Anglo-Japanese events, such as the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition (*Nichi-ei hakuran-kai*) of 14 May, along with the above-mentioned memorial service. It seems like it must have been an opportunity for the navy to promote itself as part of the already scheduled Anglo-Japanese events. As part of the institutional identity of the navy, rescheduling the unveiling might have been politically beneficial.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, such acts of solidarity from the perspective of the volunteers that had been planning the unveiling could be seen as an extension of the identity of the state. Whatever the case, on 29 May, a day with horrible weather, described as being dark and rainy, Hirose's statue found itself in the middle of a sea of umbrellas, still covered in red-white striped cloth, which was the usual imperial color scheme.<sup>33</sup> While the internal celebration at the Navy Ministry was allegedly quite sober,

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<sup>28</sup> "Kanda-ku Sudachō ni kensetsu-chū no Hirose chūsa no dōzō, Kaigun kinen-bi no ni jū shichi nichi ni jomaku-shiki" [Commander Hirose's Statue is Currently being Built in Suda Town, Kanda District, On Navy Day the 27<sup>th</sup> It will be Unveiled]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 5 May 1910. p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Nihon dai-hyakka zensho (nipponica)*. *Nichiei dōmei [Anglo-Japanese Alliance]*. Access via JapanKnowledge, 9 January 2021; The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was a military alliance between Japan and Britain against Czarist Russia and later Germany that came into existence with its first treaty signed on 30 January 1902.

<sup>30</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 67; "Honnen no kaigun kinen-bi" [This Year's Navy Day]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 13 May 1910. p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> "Honnen no kaigun kinen-bi" [This Year's Navy Day]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 13 May 1910. p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 214.

<sup>33</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 70-71; Watanabe Nagao. "Hirose chūsa no dōzō" [Commander Hirose's Statue]. *The Graphic*. 1 June 1910. p. 1-7; "Hirose chūsa dōzō jomaku-shiki no kōkei" [The Scenery of the Unveiling of Commander Hirose's Statue]. *The Navy – kaigun* Vol.5, August 1910. p. 10-11.

the people of the Kanda district held a lavish celebration in honor of Hirose.<sup>34</sup> The ceremony saw members of three different branches of the Imperial Family, Admiral Tōgō who had led the Japanese fleet into the Battle of Tsushima, Hirose's bereaved family, the Navy Minister as well as participants of the initial Naval Blockade attempts.<sup>35</sup> The unveiling was accompanied by a set of addresses of the aforementioned Admiral Tōgō, Hirose Takeo's brother Katsuhiko and Commander Takarabe.<sup>36</sup> In total, the event saw the attendance of many thousands of spectators, hundreds of military personnel, along with a variety of high standing military personnel.

## The Shifting Significance of a Memorial

Despite its splendor, however, the location of Hirose's statue quickly became problematic. When Hirose's statue was erected at Manseibashi, there had not even been a station. As, over the years, the area around Manseibashi developed, a discussion pertaining to the location of the statue too began to take shape. From esthetic concerns to mere practical ones, the location of the statue became increasingly subject to criticism.<sup>37</sup> Not only that, social life too became busier, especially after the Japanese society became more liberal during the Taishō period (1912-1926), and the public memory of the Russo-Japanese War was much less prominent as people were more caught up with their individual lives.<sup>38</sup> The Japanese state itself too was after 1912 less interested in further promoting the image of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>39</sup> Hirose's statue, in the end, became an obstacle which one needed to build around or which was impossible to work with. As an example, in 1922, the Railroad Ministry (*Tetsudō-shō*) initially planned to extend a line from Ryōgokubashi station to the Manseibashi station, but cited the physical location of the Hirose statue as one of the reasons why it later cancelled that plan.<sup>40</sup> Overall, the Hirose statue began being considered a hinderance to development and naturally voices emerged discussing the possibility to perhaps move the statue to a different location or to remove it entirely.<sup>41</sup> In the end, a discussion about relocating the statue was held in mass media outlets.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 70-71.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 208-212; *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> "Mondai no Sudachō kotoshi-chū ni toriharai, Hirose chūsa no dōzō ga, mitsudomoe no yakkai mono atsukai" [The Hirose Statue will be removed this Year From its Problematic Place in Suda Town, A Three Way Struggle of Treating the Statue as a Nuisance]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, Evening edition (EE), 2 September 1922. p. 2; "Pari de mo, dōzō to basho no hinan" [Even in Paris the Statue and its Location is being Criticized]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 6 July 1921. p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 74-75; Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 230.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "Mondai no Sudachō kotoshi-chū ni toriharai, Hirose chūsa no dōzō ga, mitsudomoe no yakkai mono atsukai" [The Hirose Statue will be removed this Year From its Problematic Place in Suda Town, A Three Way Struggle of Treating the Statue as a Nuisance]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, EE, 2 September 1922. p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> "Koibito ni sukuwareru Hirose chūsa, dōzō no iten-saki o yatto sazukaru, Tōkyō, Ōtechō ni" [Commander Hirose Saved By Lovers, Finally given a place to move the statue, To Tōkyō, Ōte Town]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 19 December 1929. p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> "Mondai no Sudachō kotoshi chū ni toriatsukai, Hirosechūsa no dōzō ga mitsudomoe no yakkai mo atsukai" [The Hirose Statue will be removed this Year From its Problematic Place in Suda Town, A Three Way Struggle of Treating the Statue as a Nuisance]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*. EE, 2 September 1922. p. 2; "Pari de mo, dōzō to basho no hinan" [Even in Paris the Statue and its Location is being Criticized]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*. ME, 6 July 1921. p. 6; "Koibito ni sukuwareru Hirose



The discussion to move the statue advanced quite far, up until the point that a location had been found. The statue was planned to be relocated to the newly built Kandabashi park (*Kandabashi kōen*). The project was undertaken by a company from the Aoyamakita town of the Akasaka district. The son of the company's manager Mura Katsugorō was an avid visitor of the statue, which moved his father to undertake the project and to donate 10,000 yen to the project himself. Yet, as far as this research could determine, this campaign for relocation must have faltered since the Manseibashi statue never moved. No extra mention of the new location could be ascertained, in fact in later commemorative events the same scenery of Hirose's Manseibashi statue kept reappearing.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the 1910s and early 1920s frustration with the location, at the end of the 1920s, the Manseibashi statue found itself again as part of elaborate commemorative events, bringing the memory of the Russo-Japanese War back with it. 27 May 1930 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Russo-Japanese War, and a large pageantry was consequently organized for the occasion. Amongst a procession of cars dressed up as naval vessels, and marching bands, a hundred trees were planned to be planted near the statue by sixteen members of the local branch of the Veteran Association<sup>44</sup> (*Shinai [...]* *Zaigō gunjin rengō-kai [...]*) after they held a ceremony themselves.<sup>45</sup> It is, however, unclear what was meant with the "vicinity" of the statue, since the plaza where the statue stood had no room for the expansion for traffic, and thus likely no room for a hundred trees.

It seems that the Manseibashi for several years had attracted comparably little attention at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, however, was a different story. Over the course of the 1930s, it is clear that the Manseibashi statue shifted from being an obstacle to a place where the past meets the present. It was militarist pageantry that gave this new meaning to the location. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hirose's death was celebrated in Tōkyō with a ceremony in front of the Manseibashi statue. On 27 May at 7 o'clock in the morning, more than 150 members of the Tōkyō Navy Young Boys Association (*Tōkyō kaigun shōnen-dan*) gathered at the statue to clean it over a span of one and a half

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chūsa, dōzō no iten-saki o yatto sazukaru, Tōkyō, Ōtechō ni" [Commander Hirose Saved By Lovers, Finally given a place to move the statue, To Tōkyō, Ōte Town]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 19 December 1929. p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> "Yatto ochitsuku gunshin no dōzō, hidoi genjō kara sukuwarete shin-kōen e" [Finally the Situation Surrounding the War God Statue has Calmed Down, It has been Saved From its Cruel Situation and will be Moved to a new Park]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, EE, 14 January 1930. p. 2.; "Chichi oya o toite ichi man en kifū, Hirose chūsa dōzō iten ni kuru Mejiro chūgakusei no bidan" [A Father Explains His Donation of Ten Thousand Yen, A Moving Tale of a Mejiro Middle School Pupil on the Moving of Commander Hirose's Statue]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 19 January 1930. p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> *Nihon dai-hyakka zensho (nipponica)*. *Teikoku zaigō gunjin-kai* [The Imperial Veteran Society] . Access via JapanKnowledge, last access: 9 January 2021; The Veteran Association (*zaigō gunjin-kai*) in Imperial Japan was a national organization with a local chapters (*rengō bunkai*) in various localities on the level of districts and towns.

<sup>45</sup> "Hirose chūsa dōzō mae ni, kinen no shoku-ju hyaku hon, rikujō gunkan no teito kōshin no nigiwai" [In Front of the Hirose Statue, A Hundred Trees Planted for Commemoration, A Lively On Land Fleet Parade in the Capital]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, EE, 28 May 1930. p. 1.

hours.<sup>46</sup> From 10 o'clock onwards, a ceremony was held which was attended by high ranking navy personnel, the remaining families of Hirose and Sugino, as well as one of the remaining members of the original Attempted Naval Blockade. Afterwards, the attendants made up a large parade which would go from the Yasukuni Shrine with the destination being Hirose's grave in Tōkyō.<sup>47</sup> When in 1935, Hirose was officially enshrined in a shrine in Taketa, his hometown organized a week of celebration. Local newspapers printed appendices where the Manseibashi statue too evoked the grandness of Hirose's legacy.<sup>48</sup>

## From Modern "War Hero" to Enshrined Deity

The first substantial discussion regarding building a shrine for Hirose and Tachibana Shūta, Japan's second *gunshin* and arguably the army counterpart to Hirose who also had been killed in the Russo-Japanese War, arose in July 1928. On 26 July, the *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun* and the *Yomiuri Shinbun* reported that Home Minister Mochizuki Keisuke (1867-1941) had informally sought after the approval of the cabinet ministers for such an undertaking.<sup>49</sup> Even though the Bureau for Shrine Affairs investigated the matter and concluded that it would be possible to erect a shrine, it was still considered "a case without any precedent" (*zenzen zenrei ga nai*).<sup>50</sup> Which is peculiar as there were precedents of military personnel being enshrined such as Nogi Maresuke (1849-1912)<sup>51</sup> and Kodama Gentarō (1852-1906)<sup>52</sup>, the former of whom had been enshrined in several shrines, and the latter of

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<sup>46</sup> "Ryojun heisoku san jū shūnen, seidai na kinen-shiki, konnichi Hirose chūsa dōzō mae de" [Thirty Years Following the Blockade at Port Arthur, A Lavish Commemorative Event, Today In Front of Hirose Takeo's Statue]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, EE, 28 March 1934. p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> "Gunshin Hirose chūsa, kyō san jū nen shikiten, dōzō no moto de seidai ni" War God Commander Hirose, Today the Thirty Year Anniversary, Lavishly at the Foot of the Statue]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, EE, 28 March 1934. p. 2; "Kansha arata ni shinobu, gunshin, Hirose chūsa, kyō san jū shūnen kinen-sai" [Remember Our Gratitude Again, War God, Commander Hirose, Today the Thirty Year Commemoration]. In: *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*, EE, 28 March 1934. p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> "Hirose chūsa no dōzō" [Commander Hirose's Statue]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, Appendix (Ap), 24 May 1935. p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> "Gunshin ryō-chūsa o matsuru jinja kenritsu, chikaku jitsugen kakugi demo sansei to keshita ga, shinrei nanode shinchō ni" [Erecting Shintō Shrines to Celebrate Both War God Commanders, Close to being Realized, Even in the Cabinet there is Agreement, However, Since it is Unprecedented, it is Precarious]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 26 July 1928. p. 11.; "Ryō-gunshin, Shōwa ni yomigaette aku-shisō yoke no kami ni Hirose, Tachibana, kokusui naishō ga kakugi e hōkoku" [Both War Gods, Revived during the Shōwa Period, Tachibana Shrine, Hirose, as Gods Against Bad Thoughts, National Purist Home Minister Briefs the Cabinet]. In: *Yomiuri Shinbun*, ME, 26 July 1928. p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Nogi Maresuke, 1849-1912, was a general of the Japanese Imperial Army. After the Meiji Restoration, he underwent a French-style military education. In 1871 he was promoted to the rank of Major and fought in the Satsuma Rebellion as regimental commander where he lost a battle flag. As a result, he considered taking his own life as retribution, but gave up the idea after the Emperor forbade him. He, furthermore, was the leader of a disastrous but successful campaign at Port Arthur in which he lost a considerable amount of men. After the death of the Meiji Emperor, he took his life together with his wife on 13 January 1912, the same day as the funeral of the Emperor. After his death he was added to the *gunshin* pantheon; *Nihon dai-hyakka zensho (nipponica)*. "Nogi Maresuke", access via JapanKnowledge, last access: 22 February 2021.

<sup>52</sup> Kodama Gentarō, 1852-1906, was an Army general born in the Tokuyama domain as eldest son of the feudal retainer. He was promoted to general after the Russo-Japanese War and had previously worked as the Army Minister from 1900 to 1902 and later in 1903 as both the Minister of Internal Affairs and Minister of Education. He succumbed to illness in 1906. He has been enshrined in a shrine in Fujisawa city in the Kanagawa prefecture in 1918; *Nihon dai-hyakka zensho (nipponica)*. "Kodama Gentarō", access via JapanKnowledge, last access: 22 February 2021.

whom had been enshrined without even being considered a *gunshin*. This stresses that there might have been something fundamentally different between the first two *gunshin* and Nogi and Kodama. In other words, it seems that Nogi was, strictly speaking, not enshrined as a *gunshin* but a *gunshin* that was enshrined, and likely as an elite and former member of the *bushi*-class, the pre-modern warrior class.<sup>53</sup> That Hirose and Tachibana were enshrined so late after their initial rise to fame might have been because Japan's population had undergone an emancipation with the introduction of universal suffrage in 1925. This contrasts with a set of individuals that had opposed any form of formal deification, the Bureau of Shrine Affairs being hesitant, in addition to locals to Taketa emphasizing that a new deity should arise naturally. The decision to formally enshrine both Russo-Japanese War heroes was the result of a massive call by Japanese audiences and, in case of Hirose, realized under the supervision of the "Support Association for the construction of the Hirose Shrine" (*Hirose jinja sōken hōsan-kai*), which was established in 1931.<sup>54</sup>

As part of commemorative efforts, in November 1933 the city of Taketa began the construction of the Hirose Shrine and the project was finished one and a half years later, on 25 May 1935.<sup>55</sup> Although the day for Hirose's proper enshrinement was chosen for its strong symbolic meaning, it might have stood in the shadow of a related event. Whereas Hirose's tale turned thirty, the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Kusunoki Masashige (1294?-1336) in the battle of Minatogawa<sup>56</sup> was arguably a more important celebration. While one can find mentions of Kusunoki in Hirose's enshrinement, highlighting the link between the two celebrations, this was not the case the other way around, due to the causality between the two. Hirose was regarded as an incarnation of Kusunoki, but Kusunoki was not seen as a premodern instance of Hirose. At the same time the celebration suffered from an extreme local nature. Despite mass media's potential to overcome the initial boundaries of locality, a shrine built in a remote location might have made it a less lucrative news story or less relatable to national audiences. However, the fact that the obscure town of Taketa saw itself featured in newspapers far from home, albeit in a limited manner and, therefore contrary to expectation, is an indication of how important Hirose's enshrinement might have been. For audiences living in Kyūshū, for instance, the enshrinement might have been more relatable, but the further off the epicenter, the harder it becomes to connect to the event.<sup>57</sup> This could have worked

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<sup>53</sup> Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 189.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184-85; Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 225-29.

<sup>55</sup> "Zen kaigun no kikin de Hirose jinja o sōken, Ōita-ken no kiji ni" [The Hirose Shrine Built with Donations from the Whole Navy, in Ōita Prefecture, His Birthplace]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 26 November 1933. p. 11; note that while there are many shrines with the name Hirose Jinja, Hirose Takeo is only enshrined in Taketa's shrine.

<sup>56</sup> The battle of Minatogawa 5 July 1336 was a battle fought during the Nanboku-Chō wars between imperial loyalists on the side of Emperor Go Daigo and the Ashikaga Shogunate. Kusunoki Masashige died on the side of the imperial loyalists and following the Meiji Restoration 1868 he became a national hero; Henshall, Kenneth. *Historical dictionary of Japan to 1945*. Scarecrow Press, 2013.

<sup>57</sup> "Hirose jinja chinza-sai, kiwamete seidai ni shikkō" [The Hirose Shrine Enshrinement Ceremony, Held Extremely Lavishly]. In: *Fukuoka Nichinichi Shinbun*, EE, 26 May 1935. p. 2; "Hirose jinja mita-

complementary with the celebration of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kusunoki, which was held closer to Ōsaka, Tōkyō, Tōhoku and Hokkaidō.

Regardless of this, Taketa itself dedicated an entire week to the inauguration of the Hirose Shrine starting on 24 March 1935 at 10 o'clock with a purification ceremony (*kiyoharaisai*), various smaller festivals and a celebration for the new shrine (*shinden-sai*).<sup>58</sup> The following day would then be in honor of the enshrinement festival (*chinza-sai*), the 26<sup>th</sup> was dedicated to the 'Festival for the Report Given to Nobility Regarding the Prefectural Shrine Ranking' (*Kensha bekkaku hōkoku-sai*), through which the shrine officially became ranked as a prefectural shrine, and was followed by the first annual festival the next day, after which, until the 30<sup>th</sup>, lavish celebrations were held throughout the town.<sup>59</sup> The celebration transformed the small town of Taketa into a place of festivities starting at the train station, where an approximately fifteen-meter-tall Shintō gate (*torii*) was erected. This was followed with the whole town being decorated with artificial flowers, imperial flags, and celebratory flyers.<sup>60</sup> At night, the town was turned into a light spectacle with votive lanterns. Aside from the enshrinement, the town also saw a navy exhibition, a firework display, a paper lantern procession for elementary and middle school students, et cetera. All these events occurred exactly in the one week where Hirose's shrine was inaugurated and acted as complementary events deliberately designed to adorn the main event, further deepening the engagement of attendees.

Ōita newspapers featured an array of memories by Hirose's bereaved family, his sister that had allegedly last seen him alive in Beppu, in Ōita prefecture before his reported death, or his relations with other high standing military personnel and former peers. With the start of the event on 24 May, the *Ōita Shinbun* printed an appendix (*furoku*) for its publication filled with collages dedicated to their new local deity.<sup>61</sup> The first page was

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mashiro, okagami, o-ken taketa e, asu sakan na chinza-sai, shodai shashi wa gunshin no jūtei" [Hirose Jinja Spiritual Transfiguration: Mirrors and Swords to be Transferred to Takeda The First Chief Priest of the Shrine is a Cousin of the God of War]. In: *Kyūshū Nippō*, Daily edition (DE), 24 May 1935. p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> "Isshū kan nigiwai, nuku gōka na hōshuku zue! Kettei shita moyooshi mono" [One Week of Festivities, Gorgeous Illustrations for the Dedication! Events to be determined]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, Ap, 25 May 1935. p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 225; "Hirose jinja chinza-sai, iyoiyo ni jū yon nichi kara san jū nichi made seidai ni" [At last, the Hirose Shrine Enshrinement Ceremony will be held from the 24th to the 30th]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, EE, 24 May 1935. p. 1; the same article has a part dedicated to the contractors that were hired for the building of the shrine. The company was called "Yamada Group" (*Yamada-gumi*) which, according to the article, had a long history in constructing shrines and temples. While being originally stationed in Ōsaka, they had worked themselves to national fame for the craft; while conducting research for this paper a sizeable amount of issues of the *Ōita Shinbun* could be consulted, but the reconstruction of the media event as it occurred in Ōita is destined to be incomplete as many issues of this newspaper are completely or partially lost.

<sup>60</sup> "Isshūkan nigiwai, nuku hōka na hōshuku zue! Kettei shita moyooshi mono" [One Week of Festivities, Gorgeous Illustrations for the Dedication! Events to be determined]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, 24 May 1935. p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> "Hirose jinja sōken kinen-gō" [Founding Anniversary Issue of Hirose Shrine]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, Ap, 24 May 1935. p. 1-7; incidentally, the first page of the appendix, on the bottom side featured a banner advertising a commemorative books series, consisting of six volumes filled with "deeply emotional true stories" (*kangeki jitsuwa*). The banner features the title of the first book in the series titled "Offer Yourself for the Empire" (*kōkoku ni mi o sasagete*) which might be a reference to Hirose and a famous poem that was ascribed to him; the collages consist of a photographs of Hirose when he was in

dedicated to iconic scenes of the event, featuring the sanctuary (*shinden*) of the shrine, Hirose's former house, his grave in Taketa, et cetera. On page four, older photographs show Hirose in various points of his life, including his time at the Naval Academy (*heigakkō*), before and during his stay in Russia, and a commemorative photograph taken after the first attempted naval blockade. Further in the appendix, on page seven, a picture of the Manseibashi statue surrounded by what appears to be the Navy Young Boys Association was featured.<sup>62</sup>

Naturally, as the president of the Support Committee for the Construction of the Hirose Shrine (*Hirose jinja sōken hōsan-kai*), Admiral Arima Ryōkitsu (1861-1944)<sup>63</sup> visited Taketa for the festivities.<sup>64</sup> During his visit, he attended the enshrinement ceremony of Hirose, as well as the "Festival for the Report Given to Nobility Regarding the Prefectural Shrine Ranking"<sup>65</sup> to then talk about Hirose and his relation with Kusunoki.<sup>66</sup> Other representatives that were present at the enshrinement ceremony included Rear Admiral Kobayashi Sōnosuke (1886-1975) as representative of Navy Minister Ōsumi Mineo (1876-1941), and Commander Hirose Sueto, the adoptive heir of Hirose Katsuhiko (1862-1920), as representative of the Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet Takahashi Sankichi (1882-1966).<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, more than 350 guards of honor (*gijōhei*) from three vessels, which Hirose himself had commanded, arrived in Taketa early on the morning of 24 May.<sup>68</sup> From the station the troops formed a procession adorned by the navy flag. The procession went through the park where the Taketa statue was built, to then go and pay respect at Hirose's Taketa grave and the house where he was born.<sup>69</sup> Afterwards, the procession would continue into the town itself where they would make their way to the shrine. The main event on the 25<sup>th</sup>, the formal enshrinement of Hirose at the newly built shrine, saw

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different stages within his life, his grave, the shrine and its *torii*, the house where he was born, et cetera.

<sup>62</sup> "Hirose chūsa no dōzō" [Commander Hirose's Statue]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, Ap, 24 May 1935. p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> Arima Ryōkitsu was a Navy officer. During the Russo-Japanese War he was aboard the battleship Mikasa as senior staff officer of the chief of staff of the Allied Fleet. At that time he had the rank of sub-lieutenant. Later he became the Head of the Naval Academy (*Kaigun heigakkō*) in 1914 and in the 1930s chief priest of the Meiji Shrine (named in September 1931) as well as member of the Shōwa Emperor's Privy Council (since 26 December 1932); Kokushi daijiten. "Arima Ryōkitsu" access via JapanKnowledge, last access: 22 February 2021.

<sup>64</sup> "Dai ni no Nankō toshite tsukushita Hirose chūsa, Arima taishō raiken shite kataru" [Commander Hirose, who served as the second Kusunoki, Admiral Arima Visiting the prefecture to talk]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, EE, 25 May 1935. p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> The meaning of this celebration is unclear. The characters used by the *Ōita Shinbun* for *hōkoku* refers to reporting something to a higher-up. The intended meaning might have been that of "patriotism".

<sup>66</sup> "Dai ni no Nankō toshite tsukushita Hirose chūsa, Arima taishō raiken shite kataru" [Commander Hirose, who served as the second Kusunoki, Admiral Arima Visiting the prefecture to talk]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, EE, 25 May 1935. p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> "Iyoiyo futaake no Hirose jinja chinza-sai, chōno no meishi, gijōhei o mukaete, kūzen no seigi" [At last, the opening ceremony of the Hirose Shrine, welcoming Asano's finest and honor guards in an unprecedented ceremony in Gyochu Taketa]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, Ap, 24 May 1935. p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> "Chōno no meishi o mukae, Hirose jinja chinza-sai, gijōhei mo sanretsu, sōgon no seigi, waki kaeru Taketa-machi" [Welcoming the Asano's Finest, the Hirose Shrine reclamation ceremony was attended by cortege of honored soldiers, and the solemn ceremony was held in Taketa Town]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, EE, 26 May 1935. p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

a massive crowd participating. The morning edition of the *Ōita Shinbun* featured a photograph of a large crowd carrying small Imperial flags in front of the shrine.<sup>70</sup>

As part of the enshrinement process two relics were collected and transported to the shrine on the day of the enshrinement by the Prefectural Governor Taguchi Yasuyuki (1883-1965) and the Head of General Affairs Kosaka.<sup>71</sup> The relics consisted of a mirror (*okagami*) which allegedly had been worshiped by the Hirose family as a deity, and a longsword (*chōtō*) which had previously been in the possession of Hirose and was donated by the widow of Captain Mizobe Yōroku (1881-1919) who had received the sword from the Hirose family. The sword had then been modified by Arima, who had engraved the blade with the phrase *shichishō hōkoku*, “seven lives for the country”, alluding to Hirose’s symbolic link with Kusunoki whose brother had allegedly pledged to “give seven lives for the country” – and for the Emperor – in the future when reborn after his death at the battle of Minatogawa in 1336 and Hirose’s famous poem by the same title.<sup>72</sup> The relics arrived in Beppu on 23 May at 2 o’clock in the afternoon and were provided by the Tōkyō branch of the Support Association.<sup>73</sup>

While he was initially against the enshrinement, Admiral Takarabe Takeshi, at this point no longer in active duty, attended the enshrinement, too. He even gave an interview in which he reminisced over his time with Hirose at the Naval Academy.<sup>74</sup> He talked about how the construction was a result of “the voice of the whole nation” (*kokumin zentai no koe*) and how he, as someone who knew Hirose, could not contain his joy. Afterwards, he told reporters of how Hirose became interested in *jūdō*. He dated Hirose’s interest back to 1884-85 when, according to him, “foreign ideas” had extended their “evil influence” on Japanese popular conscience (*gairai shisō no aku eikyō*). In response to this influx, Hirose, allegedly, had felt a need to develop an “unaffected and sincere character” (*shitsujitsu gōken no kifū*). Which led him to enter the *jūdō* division of the Kōdōkan Dōjō, where he later invited Takarabe to join him. After a while the two had impressed their superior with their dedication and were appointed to function as arbiters when a fight would break out at the Naval Academy. Supposedly, Hirose had taken that appointment as an opportunity when he told his superior that “it was a shame that there was no training ground in this flippant Japan of today where one can study the old way of the warrior” (*kono keichō fuhaku na konnichi no Nihon korai no bushidō o manabu no ni budōjō no nai no wa ikan da*), which led to the establishment of a training ground at the Naval Academy.<sup>75</sup> That he came to embrace the construction of the Shintō shrine, as well as contributing to the

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<sup>70</sup> “Hirose jinja chinza-sai gahō” [Photographic Report of The Enshrinement Ceremony of the Hirose Shrine]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, ME, 26 May 1935. p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> “Hirose jinja no mitamashiro to fuku-saishin” [Spiritual Deities and Subdeities of Hirose Shrine]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, ME, 24 May 1935. p. 3; this article was unable to confirm Kosaka’s identity, the proper reading of his name or his first name. He might have been the Head of General Affairs of the Navy Ministry. However, none of the articles specified his first name.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> “Heigakkō no dōjō wa, ko-chūsa ga umi no oya, Takarabe taishō no tsukai-dan” [Admiral Takarabe Reminiscences, The Late Commander as Father of the Naval Academy’s Dojo]. In: *Ōita Shinbun*, ME, 26 May 1935. p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.



event by showing up and holding interviews might seem contradicting to his initial response to the matter. However, times had changed and the call by the general public to construct a shrine had become too overwhelming to avoid an enshrinement. As a result, it is imaginable that not only admitting but embracing the construction might have been the optimal path for Takarabe and his peers.

In this shift towards events that commemorated Japan's past, the image of Hirose might have shifted from a cosmopolitan, patriotic figure to one that connects more deeply to the Empire. Thirty years after the attempted naval blockade at Port Arthur, Hirose's significance to Japanese audiences had been recontextualized due to the concurrent political and social waves. During the 1930s, Hirose's statue became steadily more important and regained its significance as a hotspot for commemorative events and militarist pageantry. The fact that he was enshrined properly so late is an indication of the structural characteristics of Japanese society at the time as well as how religion was initially unnecessary to *gunshin*. Compared to the initial event, in which Hirose was celebrated much more as an exemplary person, in the 1930s his image shifted towards being a fragment of imperial identity. In this, Hirose functioned as a mirror for Japanese society.<sup>76</sup>

## Conclusion

While the construction of Hirose as a national hero is not completed exclusively through the above discussed commemorative events, as the commodification and mediatization of Hirose is furthered in different ways and on different levels over the course of thirty years, they arguably constitute key events in crucial moments with regards to the construction and interpretation of him as a *gunshin*. Another key event to consider, his funeral and highly mediatized funeral procession did exceed the scope of this article. The way that Hirose's Manseibashi statue was treated over the course of several decades serves as reference to how the idea of Hirose might have been handled in the abstract space of collective memory. While the two other statues might have been neglected, it must be noted that the position of the other statues was radically different compared to the Manseibashi plaza. For one they were placed in parks, which is a less problematic location in terms of not blocking the development of public transport. Additionally, one could argue, that by being built in a park, the statues were given a position much closer to everyday life, as parks form special spaces distinct from other parts of everyday life such as commuting and work. A statue inside of a park is less an obstacle for development than one built in the middle of a plaza that over the course of two decades saw rapid development. By being built in such a public and busy environment it forced people to confront the Manseibashi statue itself and how they valued its existence. Moreover, the statues in Takayama and Taketa were arguably less impressive than the Manseibashi one, both in size and symbolism. It is clear, however, that the construction of Hirose's statues formed a key component in solidifying his image within collective national identity. The

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<sup>76</sup> "Hirose chūsa no dōzō seisō, kaigun shōnen-dan no hōshi" [Cleanup of Commander Hirose's statue by the Navy Youth Boys Association]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 28 March 1932. p. 7; Yamamuro, *Gunshin*, p. 82-83.

commemorative events turned the near vicinity of the statues, in addition to the space in newspapers dedicated to it, into forums where Hirose's identity and character were discussed and defined. As identity is usually defined in comparison to either an external or internally distinguished element, these events then also served to define the identity of Japanese audiences.<sup>77</sup> This is due to Hirose's character, as with other military heroes, being defined according to exceptionalist ideas such as the "Japanese soul" (*Yamato damashii*), the "Japanese spirit" (*Nihon seishin*) or "the way of the warrior" (*bushidō*). Since these traits were deemed to be inherently present in "the Japanese" in this essentialist discourse, the discussion on Hirose's character turned into a discussion on "the Japanese character".

Hirose, at the start of his *gunshin* legacy, constituted a transnational element, his funeral being attended by foreign representatives and others, as well as the unveiling of his Manseibashi statue finding itself in the midst of an important moment for Anglo-Japanese relations. In the light of political, economic, social and cultural transformations during the late 1920s and early 1930s, however, this shifted to a more nationalist interpretation. His tale was rediscovered during the late 1920s as the initial mourning for the dead of the Russo-Japanese War subsided,<sup>78</sup> and the physical locations where he was commemorated turned from a physical obstacle for urban development into a place where acts of militarist pageantry were held and where Japanese audiences met again with their imperial past. Hirose became an important part in national commemorative events, seeing that parts of the commemorative festivities in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russo-Japanese War were organized around his statue or as a landmark in processions. With the construction of his Shintō shrine, the surfacing of new anecdotes, like one pertaining to Hirose's interest in *jūdō*, show that Hirose's image had shifted from an internationalist figure, to one that connected more closely to the national identity more in line with concurrent politics. Since the call for enshrinement was also mainly a popular one, this also reflects the ambiguous religious nature of Hirose. This article argues that despite his enshrinement, the nature of *gunshin* remains irreligious in content. This is because it had taken thirty years before Hirose and Tachibana were enshrined, the enshrinement followed a popular call, and saw a hesitant response by the Bureau of Shrine Affairs of the Home Ministry. It might also be the case that Hirose, with his enshrinement, turned into a proper deity, however whether this influenced the notion of *gunshin* and steered it towards religiosity could not be determined. Regarding the aftermath of the Hirose Statue, the statue survived the destruction of many of Japan's bronze statues that were reused for the production of ammunition. This was a process that aimed to supplement the shortages of raw materials, such as copper and other metals necessary for the production of military equipment that occurred during the final stages of the Asia-Pacific War (1941-1945). Hirose's statue alongside only a fraction of all statues in Japan was spared of this fate, in Hirose's case, because his image was vital in

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<sup>77</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso books, 2006; Weber, Eugen. *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernization of rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford University Press, 1976.

<sup>78</sup> Shimazu, *Japanese Society at War*, p. 230.

the stimulation of nationalist fever and national worship (which was one of four categories because of which a statue could be spared from destruction). Following the end of the war, and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, a committee was established to remove problematic statues.<sup>79</sup> For the Hirose statue this meant that, as a statue integral to national worship that he was deemed problematic. The exact words of the accusation vis-à-vis the Hirose statue during the inspection committee were as follows: “We take issue with the bronze statues of Takeo Hirose and Magoshichi Sugino. Please read on. This statue will be removed because it is considered to emphasize the people's will to fight and to stimulate hostility.” (*Hirose Takeo oyobi Sugino Magoshichi dōzō o mondai ni itashimasu. Yondekudasai. Kono dōzō wa, kokumin no sen'i kōyō o kyōchō shi, tekigaishin o sosoru mono to kangaerareru kara tekkyo su*). Following the verdict as “war crime statue” (*senpan dōzō*) the statue was removed on 22 July 1947, after the Statue Trials (*dōzō shinpan*) were ended on 6 May 1947.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Saaler, *Men in Metal*, p. 219-225, 239-255.

<sup>80</sup> “Dōzō no senpan saiban” [The Statues’ War Crime Trials]. *Nihon Nyūsu*. Aired in 1947. In: NHK Hōsō-shi [https://www2.nhk.or.jp/archives/tv60bin/detail/index.cgi?das\\_id=D0009181817\\_00000](https://www2.nhk.or.jp/archives/tv60bin/detail/index.cgi?das_id=D0009181817_00000). Last accessed January 22, 2021 2:22 PM; “Dōzō shinpan owaru, ‘Hirose chūsa’ wa tsuihō, Tōkyō-to” [The Statues’ War Crime Trials Concluded, ‘Commander Hirose’ is being Prosecuted, the Capital Tōkyō]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 6 May 1947. p. 2; “Hirose chūsa dōzō tsuihō, shashin” [Commander Hirose’s Statue is being Banished, Picture]. In: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, ME, 23 July 1947. p. 2.